



Office for Standards
in Education

NURSERY INSPECTION REPORT

URN 127014

DfES Number: 521452

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 09/03/2004
Inspector Name Christine Robinson

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Sessional Day Care
Setting Name Benenden Pre-School Playgroup
Setting Address St. Georges Hall
The Street , Benenden
Cranbrook
Kent
TN17 4D4B

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name The Committee of Benenden Pre-School Playgroup

ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name Benenden Pre-School Playgroup
Address St. Georges Hall
The Street, Benenden
Cranbrook
Kent
TN17 4DB

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Benenden Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1967 and is managed by a parent management committee.

It is housed in two inter-connecting rooms on the first floor of a building which is rented from the parish council. There is an outside grassed area adjacent to the building on two sides, which the group uses for outside play. The group serves the rural villages of Benenden and Iden Green and most children go on to attend the local primary school.

There are currently 24 children from 2- 4 years on roll. This includes four funded three year olds and three funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children with special needs; all children currently speak English.

The group opens five days a week during school term-time. Sessions are from 09:00-12:00 and in the summer term, there is an additional session specifically for children leaving that term.

Four staff work with the children, two of whom hold recognised early years qualifications. Staff are supported by parents who help voluntarily on a rota basis. The setting receives support from an early years advisory teacher. The group is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) and takes part in its accreditation scheme.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Benenden Pre-School Playgroup gives children a chance to enjoy learning through play; the provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals and in the areas of social, mathematical and creative development, they are making very good progress.

The quality of teaching is generally good. The group is well organised and effective use is made of the space and resources to provide a good variety of worthwhile learning experiences. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and as a result, they behave well. As the group is quite small, staff know children well and are able to speak to parents about their general progress. Short-term plans are kept in line with the stepping stones but plans do not cover all areas of the early learning goals equally. As a result of this and patchy formative assessment records, there are ineffective links between planning and assessment.

Leadership and management is generally good. The committee delegate all responsibility for the early years curriculum to the supervisor and her staff. There are termly staff meetings and appraisals and the low staff turn-over ensures children receive continuity of care. Good liaison with the local primary school help staff prepare children for school. The group is used to self-assessment and is a participant in the PLA accreditation process. However, the monitoring of the planning and assessment systems is not effective.

Partnership with parents is generally good. They are kept informed through regular newsletters and the notice-board. Staff welcome parents and give them regular updates on children's daily progress. Although the group takes part in the transfer document scheme, parents are given limited information about the detail of the Foundation Stage. They are able to take an active part in the group by sitting on the committee and by being a parent helper.

What is being done well?

- Children demonstrate good manipulative co-ordination and are able to handle wood- working tools competently and responsibly with minimal supervision. For example, one boy was observed to hammer a nail carefully into wood and then retract it using the claw of the hammer.
- There is a good balance of free and structured activities and the emphasis is on a strong play-based curriculum. Children have many opportunities to extend their imagination through regular access to a varied range of messy play and role-play.
- Staff increase children's vocabulary through conversation, songs and stories and use questions effectively to enable children to think. Staff encourage children to talk about their families, events in their lives and their

environment.

What needs to be improved?

- the opportunities for children to find out about cultural diversity
- the breadth of planning across all six early learning goals
- the opportunities for three year olds to explore and investigate why things happen and how they work
- the written information for parents about the Foundation Stage and how they might be involved in their children's learning
- the effectiveness of assessment and planning systems to ensure that records of formative assessment are used to inform planning.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection in 1999, there were no key issues but it was recommended that the group should continue to implement the established systems for monitoring, reviewing and evaluation of teaching, planning and assessment. Progress in this respect has been limited.

Since the last inspection, the desirable learning outcomes have become early learning goals and since the spring and summer term of 2003, the group has made major changes in its planning and especially its assessment systems. The group no longer keep medium-term plans and the 'notes from home' scheme, the termly written summaries of progress, the end of school year booklets and the tick-chart assessment sheets have all stopped.

Short-term planning identifies the learning outcomes for children but this is mostly done for craft and food activities. The group has successfully used the transfer document scheme as a form of summative assessment and the local school and parents were pleased to see the written report of children's progress along the stepping stones. However, the replacement form of formative assessment which uses written observations, backed up by post-it notes, has not been well managed. For example, there have been only one or two very brief written observations written since September 2003 for each child. Although staff can discuss children's general progress well, the lack of formal records means that there is insufficient evidence to plan for children's individual progress. This area is now the subject of an important key issue.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children are friendly, self-confident and their behaviour is good. They enjoy positive relationships with staff and each other and are able to share and take turns in small and larger groups. Children are familiar with routines and are developing concentration and independence.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Generally Good

Children's spoken language is developing well and they learn to negotiate and express imagined experiences. Children listen attentively to stories and enjoy learning new words and recalling part of the story to staff. Children have good opportunities to practise emergent writing skills and older children are beginning to be able to write their own names.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

Children learn about number through practical activities like sand and water. They decide how many cups will be needed by counting the number of children at the snack table. Children use mathematical language to describe shape, position and quantity; for example, they learn about 'over, under and through' when hearing 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' story. Many children can count to 10 and are beginning to learn about simple addition and subtraction through activities like counting rhymes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

The group is situated in a village and children develop a sense of community through planned walks, project work and occasional visitors. Children learn to assemble and join materials by experimenting with collage and scrap materials and support their learning through regular use of a computer. Children have limited opportunities to learn about cultural diversity and younger children have limited opportunities to explore and investigate why things happen and how things work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children enjoy regular outside play and develop skills like pedalling, running, jumping and catching through the use of a wide range of equipment. They develop hand/eye co-ordination through handling a variety of tools in craft, sand, water and woodwork and show competence in threading and cutting activities. Gaps in the planning for physical play both inside and outside mean that some children are not sufficiently challenged.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Judgement:	Very Good
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Children enjoy a good range of cooking and creative activities. They express their feelings through using musical instruments and free access to home-corner play. Children are able to explore colour, texture and shape through a varied range of messy play activities and collage materials such as coloured sand, glitter and leaves.

Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- extend planning to ensure there are more opportunities for:
 - (i) children to find out about cultural diversity
 - (ii) three year olds to explore and investigate why things happen and how they work
- ensure planning is written in line with the stepping stones across all six early learning goals, including planning for physical play
- provide written information for parents about the Foundation Stage so that they can be more involved in their children's learning
- monitor the effectiveness of assessment and planning systems to ensure that records of formative assessment are used to inform planning.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.